

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJ: INTERVIEW WITH KOFI AWOONOR

REFS: A. ACCRA 7759 (NOTAL) B. ACCRA 7713 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. KOFI AWOONOR, WHO WAS RECENTLY FOUND GUILTY OF HARBORING A SUSPECTED COUP PLOTTER AND HELPING HIM TO ESCAPE THE COUNTRY, WAS INTERVIEWED AT CAPE COAST UNIVERSITY IN KUMASI, GHANA BY A NEWSMAN FROM N.Y. TIMES WITH PAO IN ATTENDANCE. AWOONOR LOOKED WELL AND RESPONDED READILY TO QUESTIONS. HE APPARENTLY PLANS TO REMAIN AT CAPE COAST FOR THE TIME BEING AND SAYS HE WILL BE A GHANAIAAN REPRESENTATIVE TO FESTAC IN NIGERIA. END SUMMARY.

2. KOFI AWOONOR WHO HAS RETURNED TO CAPE COAST UNIVERSITY AND RESUMED DUTIES AS LECTURER IN ENGLISH, WAS INTERVIEWED AT UNIVERSITY BY VISITING N.Y. TIMES WEST AFRICA CORRESPONDENT JOHN DARNTON IN PRESENCE OF PAO WHO DROVE DOWN WITH DARNTON.

3. AWOONOR LOOKS WELL AND SPEAKS FREELY AND CHEERFULLY. HE AGREED READILY TO THE INTERVIEW AND WAS NOT HESITANT IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RESPONSES, ASKING ONLY AT THE END AND WITH SMILE THAT HE

NOT BE QUOTED IN ANYTHING HE DIDN'T SAY. DARNTON ASSURED HIM THAT HE PLANNED BROAD AND NOT VERY PENETRATING WRAPUP ON STORY AS TIMES HAD NOT COVERED IT EXTENSIVELY WHEN THE TRIAL WAS ON. PAO AND OTHERS PRESENT OFFERED TO WITHDRAW WHILE INTERVIEW WENT ON BUT WERE INVITED BY AWOONOR TO STAY.

4. IN ADDITION TO RECAPITULATING EVENTS OF TRIAL, AWOONOR SAID ONLY THAT HE PLANNED TO STAY AT CAPE COAST AND TEACH AND PROBABLY WOULD WRITE SOMETHING ONE DAY ON THE TRIAL, THOUGH HE COULD NOT DO SO NOW. HE SAID HE HAD NOT BEEN PHYSICALLY MISTREATED ALTHOUGH HE HAD BEEN THREATENED WITH PHYSICAL VIOLENCE. AS FOR HIS PRINCIPAL DEFENSE THAT HE HAD NOT KNOWN KATTAH WAS PLOTTING A COUP HE REPEATED THIS ADDING HE STILL DID NOT BELIEVE THIS WAS THE CASE. HE CLAIMED KATTAH WAS A VERY ABLE MAN AND IF HE HAD BEEN ATTEMPTING ANYTHING LIKE THIS HE WOULD HAVE DONE IT MORE EFFECTIVELY AND WOULD HAVE ENLISTED THE SUPPORT OF MANY OFFICERS WITH WHOM HE WAS CLOSE RATHER THAN THE OTHER ACCUSED, SOME OF WHICH HE APPARENTLY HAD NEVER MET.

5. AWOONOR INDICATED HE BELIEVED INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE FROM U.S. AND LONDON WAS IMPORTANT IN MITIGATING THE TREATMENT HE RECEIVED AND THAT HE WAS GRATEFUL FOR THE INTEREST AND SUPPORT OF FRIENDS. HE SAID HE HAD HAD REAL FEARS OF A LONG PRISON SENTENCE.

6. HE SAID HE HAS BEEN NAMED TO ONE OF THE GHANAIAAN COMMITTEES FOR FESTAC AND EXPECTED TO TRAVEL TO LAGOS FOR AT LEAST PART OF THE FESTIVAL, INDICATING THAT HE WOULD VISIT DARNTON THERE AT THAT TIME.

7. COMMENT: AWOONOR GAVE EVERY INDICATION OF BEING RELAXED AND ASSURED IN HIS PRESENT SITUATION. THE FACT THAT HE HAS BEEN ALLOWED TO RESUME HIS TEACHING AT THE UNIVERSITY, THAT HE HAS ACCEPTED THIS AND APPARENTLY PLANS TO STAY ON, AS WELL AS THE FACT THAT HE IS ON THE GHANA FESTAC DELEGATION SUGGESTS THAT THE GOG IS GOING TO SOME LENGTHS TO DEMONSTRATE HIS RETURN TO THEIR GOOD GRACES.
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